

Flood damages boro in huge areas of greater Sylhet

Farmers in two Kishoreganj upazilas using unripe crops as fodder

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Flash flood has damaged boro crops on around two lakh hectares of land in greater Sylhet region and Kishoreganj district.

About three lakh farmers have been directly affected in Sylhet region as early flooding caused by heavy downpour and rolling of water from the hills across the border in India destroyed paddy on 1.52 lakh hectares of land, said our staff correspondent quoting officials of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE).

Water Development Board (WDB) authorities' failure to protect the embankments due to alleged corruption also added to the situation, sources said.

Agriculture officials said the loss would stand at Tk 1,318 crore while local sources claimed that about 10 lakh tonnes of paddy worth Tk 1700 crore has been lost by the calamity.

Meantime, Sunamganj WDB executive engineer Abdul Hekim has been put under suspension for negligence in saving embankments.

A high level team from the WDB will investigate the irregularities, sources said.

Boro was cultivated on 4.27 lakh hectares of land in Sylhet, Sunamganj, Moulvibazar and Habiganj districts this year but floods badly affected crops on 1.52 lakh hectares, causing loss of 7.75 lakh tonnes of crops worth Tk 1,318 crore, DAE sources said.

The affected farmers somehow managed to harvest a portion of their unripe paddy from the inundated croplands.

In worst affected Sunamganj district, boro crops on 1,03,045 hectares of

land out of a total 1,93,000 hectares has been lost, agriculture officials said. The production loss has been primarily estimated at 5.27 lakh tonnes worth Tk 896 crore.

In Sylhet district, the crop loss has been estimated at 2.08 lakh tonnes of paddy worth Tk 354 crore as 40,700 hectares of boro lands out of the total 75,800 hectares went under water.

In Moulvibazar, 37,000 tonnes of boro (worth Tk 63.34 crore) on 7,285 hectares of

land has been damaged while the total boro filed in the district this year is 49,150 hectares.

In Habiganj, 1.09 lakh hectares were used for boro paddy this year. Of that, 580 hectares had been damaged causing production loss of 2967 tonnes of paddy worth Tk 5.04 crore.

A Correspondent reports from Kishoreganj: Around 30 thousand hectares of boro paddy has gone under water due to flooding in Itna and Mithamoin upazilas of

Kishoreganj district in last few days.

With deterioration of flood situation in the haor areas of the district due to onrush of hill water, farmers are getting their unripe paddy cut in exchange of lion's share of the crop to the labourers.

Any visitor in the area will now see hundreds of women and children harvesting unripe paddy to feed their cows.

Frustrated paddy farmers are now worried about paying their debt that they took to

meet up the cultivation cost, said farmers Ibrahim of Wara and Haji Abul Kashem of Joishiddi in Itna upazila.

Day labourers are demanding Tk 500-600 a day for harvesting paddy and boat owners take Tk 1000 to 1500 a day to carry 100 to 200 hundred maunds of paddy.

Public representatives and agriculture officials said two-thirds of Itna upazila and half of Mithamoin upazila has already gone under water while several embankments have collapsed.



PHOTO: STAR

Journalists form a human chain in front of Sylhet Press Club yesterday demanding immediate arrest of and exemplary punishment to the killers of Fateh Osmani, Sylhet correspondent of Saptahik-2000.

PROTESTS CONTINUE IN SYLHET

Bring Osmani's killers to book, demand newsmen

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Newsmen here formed a human chain in front of Sylhet Press Club yesterday demanding arrest of killers of journalist Fateh Osmani.

Several leaders of AL, BNP and local elite also joined the human chain on the last day yesterday of 3-day programme by the press club.

Later the journalists at a meeting announced another week-long agitation from today.

The fresh programme includes signature campaign from today, mourning procession on May 9 and submitting memo to the home min-

ister through the deputy commissioner and metropolitan police officials.

The journalists will also raise fund for helping Osmani's daughters' education.

Sylhet regional correspondent of the Saptahik-2000, Fateh Osmani was critically injured in an attack by an armed gang while returning home from workplace on April 18 midnight.

He was rushed to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College and Hospital and sent to the capital on the following day. He succumbed to his injuries on April 28 at Apollo Hospital in Dhaka.

Former District

Correspondent of UNB, Osmani also worked for three regional dailies of Sylhet in the past.

His death sparked agitation in Sylhet.

Locals blocked the Airport Road for three hours at Chowkidekhi on Thursday.

They also took out a procession and held a rally demanding immediate arrest of the killers.

Two days after the incident, local people caught Saddam, known as Tiger Saddam, a notorious mugger of the area and handed him over to police as a suspect.

Later police also arrested two others in connection with the murder.



PHOTO: STAR

Farmers carrying damaged boro plants in boats after cutting it from their inundated field in a haor area of Itna upazila under Kishoreganj district as flash floods caused massive damage to the crop only a few days before ripening.

SNIPPETS

BSF pushes back youth

A CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) early yesterday pushed back through Doulatpur border Bangladeshi youth Sukkur Ali whom they shot and forcibly took inside India from Baroachra border at Benapole Sunday noon. Locals rescued seriously injured Sukkur Ali and admitted him to Jessore Sadar Hospital. BDR said, the BSF members of Haridaspur camp at Baroachra border shot Sukkur Ali on Sunday noon and forcibly took him inside India from the zero point. They detained him at BSF camp and tortured throughout the night and pushed him back to Bangladesh.

Roadblock in Gaibandha

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

A few hundred people barricaded Rangpur-Bogra highway Sunday night for about an hour demanding arrest and punishment to the culprits who attacked a union Awami League leader. Police said Abdur Rashid, secretary of Taluk-Kanupur union Awami League was returning home from Gabindagnaj town on Saturday night. As he reached Katakhal, a gang of armed criminals attacked him. An FIR was lodged but police did not take steps to arrest the culprits. Demanding their immediate arrest locals barricaded the highway at Balua bazaar. Hundreds of vehicles remained stranded for over an hour on both sides of the road.

Croc kills fisherman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A fisherman was killed by a crocodile on Sunday morning on the bank of the Shyala river under Sharankhola upazila of Bagerhat district. The victim was identified as Sohel Howlader, 24, son of Jahangir Howlader of Baroikhali village under Morrelganj upazila. The incident occurred as Sohel was catching fry in the river along with his father and other fishermen. Later, his body was found floating in the river.

Schoolboy electrocuted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A schoolboy of Birganj upazila died yesterday as he came in contact with a live electric wire. The incident occurred when he climbed a roadside tree to catch bird on way to school. The deceased was identified as Belal Hossain, 14, son of Bahez Ali of village Jagdal under Birganj municipality and a class eight student of Kabi Nazrul High School. Witnesses said Belal climbed a roadside eucalyptus tree in front of Abdul Patwari Auto Rice Mill of Birganj-Panchagarh highway for birds. But accidentally he touched the 440 volt live wire which passed through the tree.

2 Bangla Bhai aides held in Naogaon

OUR CORRESPONDENT, C/nawabganj

Police arrested two alleged members of banned militant outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) at Shafikpur of Raninagar upazila in Naogaon early yesterday.

The arrestees are ATM Ali, 50, and his son Jamal Uddin, 26.

Duty officer of Raninagar police station SI Hayat Ali

Khondokar said, acting on a tip off, a team from the police station raided Ali's house at Shafikpur village at around 4:30 am and arrested the two.

Police yesterday produced them before the court which sent them to jail.

One Abdus Samad of Shafikpur village filed a case with Judicial Magistrate Court against them on April 4, 2010 on charge of kidnaping and ransacking houses

in the village during 2004.

ATM Ali and his son Jamal were close associates of Siddikul Islam Bangla Bhai.

They went into hiding after the execution of Bangla Bhai.

Ali was wanted in several cases including murders, kidnap and extortion, police said.

Earlier, Naogaon police arrested three other JMB men in the district last month.

DEATH OF LIZA DAS IN SYLHET Husband, his sister held on murder charge

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Kotwali police on Sunday night arrested businessman Nilkanta Das and his sister in connection with the murder of his wife Liza Das.

Earlier, father Babon Dhar filed a case with the Kotwali police station accusing Liza's husband and other members of his family.

Dhar hails from Kasba upazila in Brahmanbaria but he stays in Sylhet along with

family.

Police quoted Nilkanta as saying that Liza entered bathroom at about 4:30 pm Sunday but she did not come out even after a long time. There she killed herself. Mentally sick Liza herself had cut her throat using a sharp knife in a bid to commit suicide when she was 7 months' pregnant, Nilkanta claimed.

At about 5:30 pm Nilkanta took his wife to the MAG Osmani Medical College and Hospital where the physicians

found her dead.

Police and hospital sources said, the body bore marks of injuries on the throat.

Liza was the second wife of Nilkanta, whose first wife also committed 'suicide' three and a half year ago, family sources said.

Officer-in-charge (OC) of Kotwali PS Mohammad Ali said they sent suspects Nilkanta and his sister Shankari Das to the judicial magistrate court yesterday.

"We are waiting for the autopsy report," he added.



Inter-district buses lie idle at Lalmonirhat terminal as District Motor Vehicle Owners' Association enforced a two-day strike yesterday protesting illegal toll collection by a section of people in the transport sector in the name of labour welfare, right, passengers are seen waiting for train as an alternative source of transport at local rail station.



PHOTO: STAR

POTATO DAMAGE IN RANGPUR, NILPHAMARI Growers demand action against cold storage, compensation

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Farmers of Rangpur and Nilphamari districts held a demonstration in front of the office of deputy commissioner (DC) yesterday demanding compensation for potatoes damaged at Moulana Bashir Uddin Cold Storage.

They submitted a memorandum to the DC requesting him to form a committee to probe the matter, make a list of the affected farmers and hoarders and realise

the compensation for them from the owners of the cold storage.

The farmers also urged the authorities to take action against the cold storage management for not arranging alternative sources for power supply during load shedding.

Most of the 60,000 bags of potatoes were damaged at the end of April as the power generator of the cold storage went out of order during load shedding.

The affected farmers threatened to

block all roads on May 10 if their demands are not met by this week.

Nazrul Islam Hokkani, a farmer of Pargachha area alleged that the cold storage owner stored about 60,000 bags of potatoes against the capacity of 40,000.

Alamgir Choudhury, a farmer of Mahiganj area demanded punishment to the cold storage owner for his senseless act.

Trial of BDR men in Rangamati resumes

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Trial of 75 accused BDR jawans of 9 Rifle Battalion resumed on Monday after it was adjourned on February 18 at special court-4 at the BDR sector headquarters in Rangamati.

Twelve witnesses, including eleven civilian, gave their depositions against all the accused before the three-member makeshift special court.

BDR Director General Maj Gen Md Moinul Islam was heading the three-member

court. The other members are Lt Col Md. Abdur Rouf and Major Golam Mostafa al-Mamun.

All the accused were produced before the court and the court was adjourned at 9:30am.

The court so far has received depositions from 23 witnesses out of 100.

Three cases were filed against 12 Rifle Battalion of Longudu, 9 Rifle Battalion of Baghaichhari and 18 Rifle Battalion of Barkal upazila of Rangamati following the

February 25-26 mutiny.

Australian Property and Migration Exhibition

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